

Washington, DC -- On Thursday, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-7), a former 3-Star Admiral, introduced the "Enhancing America's Security through Redeployment from Iraq Act," which sets a deliberate timetable for the re-deployment of our Armed Forces from Iraq by December 31, 2007."

Noted Joe, "Our men and women in uniform have performed brilliantly in Iraq and served our country courageously. The worsening situation in Iraq is a product of on-going sectarian violence in which our troops have been asked to take sides and referee an on-going civil-war. But sending more troops to Iraq, and remaining there indefinitely, will only further increase the dependence of the Iraqis on the United States of America, both politically and militarily, at a time when they should be shouldering increased responsibility for their country.

"Most importantly, remaining in Iraq means less security and a greater strategic security risk for America by negatively impacting the readiness of our Armed Forces and hindering our ability to adequately focus on other security priorities here at home and throughout the world, including the Global War on Terror and regional challenges from Afghanistan, North Korea, and Iran to the Western Pacific and Middle East regions.

"That is why today I have introduced binding legislation setting the end of 2007 for our redeployment from Iraq. The rationale for doing so is clear – redeployment from Iraq will enhance our security around the world by allowing us to properly address other potential challenges around the world, and by allowing us to resolve the concerns about the readiness of our Armed Forces here at home. Rather than leading to a spiral of violence, redeployment from Iraq will serve as the necessary catalyst for the Iraqis to assume responsibility for their country. The needed reconciliation will only come about when their political leaders are forced to make the difficult political steps needed to cease the violence in their country, such as building coalitions among competing sects, ensuring minority rights, balancing power between provincial and central governments, and sharing oil revenues among all regions in Iraq.

"By setting a date certain – a deliberate timetable for redeployment – we are able to create a catalyst for the political leaders in Iraq to acknowledge and accept that they must take the difficult political steps necessary to cease the sectarian violence, as they understand that otherwise they would bear consequences of not assuming the responsibility for their country "

The Enhancing America's Security through Redeployment from Iraq Act sets a deliberate timetable for the redeployment of United States Armed forces from Iraq by the end of 2007 in order to best address America's security interests both at home and abroad.

The findings of this legislation include:

The worsening situation in Iraq is a product of ongoing sectarian violence in which the United States Armed Forces have been asked to take sides and referee an ongoing civil war.

Sending more troops to Iraq, and remaining there indefinitely, will only further increase the dependence of the people of Iraq on the United States, both politically and militarily, when they should be shouldering increased responsibility for their country.

The failure of the United States to confidently engage diplomatically with all countries in the region has only contributed to the difficulty of ensuring the stability of Iraq.

The ongoing involvement of the United States in Iraq has negatively impacted the readiness of our Armed Forces and hindered our ability to adequately focus on other security priorities here at home and throughout the world, including the Global War on Terror and regional challenges from Afghanistan, North Korea, and Iran to the Western Pacific and Middle East regions.

In order to address these concerns, the United States must communicate unequivocally to the political leaders in Iraq they must take the difficult political steps necessary to cease the sectarian violence in Iraq.

The United States should take a leadership role in diplomatic efforts negotiations necessary for countries in the region, including Iran and Syria, to work together to ensure the long-term stability of Iraq, which is in both their best interests and the best interests of the United States.

The United States should convene an international conference to bring together countries

throughout the world to provide economic aid for rebuilding the infrastructure of Iraq and other reconstruction efforts in Iraq.

In order to better address our global security interest and to improve the readiness of our Armed Forces, this binding legislation requires that:

All United States Armed Forces serving in Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom shall be redeployed outside of Iraq, to locations within the Middle East or Southwest Asia regions, to other regions of the world, or returned to the United States, by December 31, 2007, with the exception of:

- Special Operations Forces assigned outside of Iraq that conduct either targeted counter-terrorism operations or periodic support operations of the Iraqi security forces in Iraq.
- Members of the Air Force and Naval Forces assigned to locations within the Middle East region, but outside of Iraq for the purposes of conducting air operations (including air operations in support of combat operations) to support the Iraqi Armed Forces.
- Targeted counter-terrorism operations.

Funds for Operation Iraqi Freedom spent after December 31st, 2007, may only be used for the purpose of providing funding for the personnel and activities listed above.

The redeployment of Armed Forces under the "Enhancing America's Security through Redeployment from Iraq Act" shall be carried out at a deliberate, orderly pace that allows the full security of the members of our Armed Forces.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever to serve in the U.S. Congress.

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